Cost of New Lunatic Asylum for Middlesex.—Sir: Under this head there appears in your last week's paper a letter, signed "An Architect," which, as containing two misstatements, I cannot allow to pass unnoticed. It is true that the estimate of the competition design was 80,000*l*., but owing to a considerable increase in the width and height of the galleries (from 12 feet to 14 feet) required by the magistrates, besides the addition of an assembly-room, dining-hall, schools, and an extension of the centre buildings and offices, the adopted estimate was 114,000*l*. In answer to the question, "does not this shew defective plans, to call for so much alteration, or unfair estimate in the first instance?" I may answer that the arrangement of my original plan has not been altered in the slightest degree, and that the estimate was nearly the same as those of the two other premiated designs, which contained the same amount of accommodation, and were certainly more costly in style; so that it may be assumed to have been a fair competition estimate. The contract has (as you correctly stated in your note) been taken at 138,000*l*. Your insertion of this in your next paper will oblige, Sir, yours, &c., S. W. Daukes, Architect, 14, Whitehall-place, November 27, 1848.

Liverpool Architectural Society.—The fourth meeting of the present session was held at the Royal Institution, on Wednesday, November 15th; Mr. J. A. Picton, in the chair. Mr. Arthur Holme presented to the society an original drawing of the late Mr. Telford; being a design for a suspension bridge over the Mersey, at Runcorn, in the year 1817. It was interesting as shewing the original conception of what was afterwards matured in the Conway and Menai bridges. Accompanying this was another drawing by the late Thomas Rickman, referring to, and modifying, the design of Telford. Some wood carvings were exhibited, the work of Mr. Richard Sherratt, of Liverpool. A portion of the original drawings were exhibited for a forthcoming work of Messrs. Bowman and Crowther, of Manchester, on Ecclesiastical architecture. Some specimens were also shewn of a forthcoming work on Temple Bolsall church, by Mr. Davies, of Chester. The paper of the evening was read by Mr. Holme, "On Fireproof Construction," in which the writer went into the history of the subject, and entered into considerable detail as to the nature and form of cast and wrought girders, columns, arches, and ties, particularly as applicable to warehouses and buildings to contain merchandise.

Exhibition of Mechanical Inventions.—The report of the council of the Society of Arts, Adelphi, read at the opening meeting, contained the following passage:—"It is proper that the council should direct special attention to a new feature in the exhibitions of the present session. It has been complained, perhaps justly, that for a couple of years the society has directed attention too exclusively to the fine arts, to the neglect of the mechanical arts and manufactures. This may, perhaps, be in part true, but in reforming the operations of the society it was necessary to begin with one thing, and to do one thing at a time. The council have postponed the mechanics—not lost sight of them—and have availed themselves of the past vacation to prepare the large room on the ground-floor for the reception at Christmas of an exhibition of models of new and important inventions of recent date, and of a mechanical nature. This, they hope, will afford to inventors the opportunity they so much want, of bringing valuable inventions under the notice of the public, and also afford to the public the gratification of having laid systematically before them all that is most important in the records of modern invention."

Stir in the Royal Society.—A contest has run high in the Royal Society as to the appointment of a secretary in the place of Dr. Roget, who resigned. The council named Mr. Grove; the physiologists and naturalists complained of having no representative amongst the officers, and named Professor Thos. Bell in opposition. At the anniversary meeting on Thursday last the ballot was taken, and Mr. Bell was elected by a majority of 30.

Projected Works.—Advertisements have been issued for tenders by 17th inst. for the erection of St. Mark's Schools, Wolverhampton; by 16th, for the erection of twenty cottages at Stoke-upon-Trent, for the North Staffordshire Railway Company: by 5th, for the supply of a steam-engine and works connected with the St. Pancras workhouse well, &c.; by 12th, for the erection of closets, washrooms, &c., at the Watford Union Workhouse, Watford, Herts; by 29th, for an expansive condensing pumping-engine, &c., for the Hull corporation waterworks, Stone Ferry, Hull; by 7th, for the works required in the erection of a parsonage at Sowerby, Halifax; by 4th, for the erection of two gate-houses on the line of railway between Havant and Portsmouth; by a date not specified, for the construction of an iron suspension foot-bridge, to cross the Clyde at Glasgow; by 4th, for making an oval sewer at Bristol; by 7th, for a supply of broken Kentish pit flints, for Camden-town; by 9th, for the supply of English oak timber, oak scantling, mahogany, deals, battens, &c., for the Brighton and South Coast Railway Company; and by 7th, for a supply of 60 tons soft melting pig iron, for the Admiralty.

Competition.—A premium of 50*l*., or the usual commission, is offered for plans, specifications, and estimates, by 25th January next, for draining the town of Cardiff.

Injury to Timber by Chemical Works.—In a recent case, concluded by arbitration, between the proprietors of property near Wakefield and a manufacturer of alkalis there, the arbiter (according to a local paper) has awarded, "in the actions tried at York for the two plaintiffs, on behalf of Sir William Pilkington and Mr. Waterton, 40*s*. damages—which, of course, carry the costs of the two actions: to Mr. Waterton, 1,000*l*. for damages to his trees; 100*l*. damages to his mansion by smoke and vapour; and some other small damages. Also damages to Sir William Pilkington for his trees, and to the tenants of both those gentlemen for damages to their crops. The arbitrator also directs the discontinuance of the manufacture of salt cake. The defendant has also to pay all his own costs of the action and of the reference; half the plaintiff's costs of the reference; and three-fourths of the other costs of the reference, and of the arbitrator's award."

British Archæological Association.—At a meeting held Nov. 24, Mr. C. R. Smith gave a description of an extensive Roman villa recently excavated in a field called Dane's field, near Hartlip, Kent, at the expense and under the superintendence of Mr. W. Bland, one of the members of the association. Nearly thirty rooms have been opened. Some of the rooms were heated by means of furnaces, the flues of which opened underneath the pavements, which were supported by hollow tiles, filled with earth. Adjoining are two baths, the leaden pipes for drawing off the water from which still remain. Among the many objects found in and about the rooms is some window glass, which appears to have been cast in a mould. A paper on Domestic Architecture, as illustrated by a curious wooden house at Pitchford, Salop, by Mr. T. F. Dukes, was also read.

Architectural Association.—A paper on Monumental Architecture, by Mr. Seddons, for which we shall endeavour to find room, was read at a meeting on the 17th ult. A meeting of the society will be held this (Friday) evening, December 1, at Lyon's Inn Hall, Strand.

Brighton Pavilion.—The notice given that it is "the intention of Her Majesty's Commissioners of Woods and Forests to bring in a Bill in the next session to extinguish all right of way or common over the Pavilion ground, and to empower the sale or letting of the same, provision being made for opening a thoroughfare across the grounds in continuation of East-street," has, of course, caused considerable discussion in the governing board of the town. It was thought strange that Government, who had taken so much pains to open the lungs of other towns by sanitary measures, should wish to close the lungs of Brighton. If it was now abandoned as a Royal residence, it did not follow that it might not be required for other branches of the Royal family hereafter.

Dwellings of the Poor.—Mr. Charles Cochrane, who, though he has done some foolish things, is entitling himself to praise by his steady attention to sanitary reform, said, in a recent speech at a meeting in favour of the employment of the poor:—With regard to their dwellings, I find from the elaborately-compiled tables before me, for which we are indebted to the zeal of that eminent philanthropist, the Rev. W. Quekett, that in St. George's-in-the-East, there are 2,618 houses, 1,802 of which belong entirely to poor people. Devonshire and Star streets contain 123 houses, with 492 rooms, in size 8 feet high by 8 feet square, with three persons in each room, amounting to 1,476 in number. There are 6,328 rooms inhabited by separate families, but a few inches larger than those in the two streets alluded to. In well-constructed hospitals the space allotted to each patient to breathe in contains 1,000 cubic feet of air. In St. Martin's, and the St. James's Workhouse the inmates have from 500 to 600, whilst the quantity obtained by the independent labourer of St. George's-in-the-East is limited to the small amount of 170 cubic feet of air—a privation which cannot fail to engender the most fatal diseases. In St. Martin's parish the artisans and labouring classes suffer severely from over-crowded and expensive dwellings. I have myself seen from three to four families of different sexes and of various ages living in one small room: they eat, drink, sleep, wash, dress, and undress therein, without curtain or screen of any kind. Every domestic arrangement essential to the preservation of decency and cleanliness is wanting. The atmosphere is of the most fœtid and pestiferous kind, whilst the water in the house-butts, preserved for the purpose of drinking as well as of washing, is so foul and offensive that the poor lodgers are driven to seek some of a pure kind at the nearest publichouse, and are thereby compelled to spend much of their hard earnings in stimulating drinks.

Cottages for Labourers.—In Gloucester an association has been formed to promote the building of cottages of good construction for working men, with gardens attached, in the immediate vicinity of the city. Each cottage is to contain a good, light, airy living-room, with a second apartment for washing, &c., which must be well supplied with water; not less than three sleeping-rooms, and also proper and separate conveniences. Ventilation and drainage are to be attended to. The second thing is, "To facilitate the purchase of the cottages and gardens by the occupants themselves, by fixing such a rent as shall in about fourteen years liquidate the whole amount of the purchase-money and the interest accruing thereon, the society entering into an agreement with each occupant to convey the property as soon as the purchase-money agreed upon shall have been paid." The advantages that are expected to accrue from the scheme are these: the encouragement "of habits of providence, cleanliness, and order, amongst the occupants;" the elevation of their standard of morals and self-respect, by removing them from the degenerating influences of bad society, overcrowded or unhealthy dwellings, to which they are so often unnecessarily exposed."

Failure of Foundations.—Sir: The failure of the viaduct, recently, on the Sheffield and Manchester Railway, suggests the expediency of having recourse to piling in all doubtful cases. There is, however, a very good reason why engineers and contractors seek to avoid such an expedient wherever they can, and that is, the expense of pile-driving; and therefore, wherever there is a chance of doing without piles, a foundation is made without them, though failure sometimes results. For my own part, I have a great conviction of the utility and economy of Dr. Potts's process of pile-driving, or as I should rather call it pile-excavating, because the pile sinks from the earth, sand, or clay being excavated from beneath it. I would therefore suggest to engineers and contractors the benefit they would get from using piles, when they can do it so cheaply and efficiently, as Mr. Stephenson's works on the Chester and Holyhead Railway prove. I am surprised that the process is not more used, but I think it arises from a misapprehension of it. C. E.

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